

Melancon Worked with House Leadership to Secure Additional Hurricane Recovery Funding
June 19, 2008

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Following the vote, Rep. Melancon made the following statement:

"Half-built levees won't protect us from the next major storm, and I am pleased both Congress and the President have agreed to keep funding 100-year flood protection for New Orleans, St. Bernard and upper Plaquemines. I am especially grateful to the House Democratic leadership, who have traveled to south Louisiana year after year to view the progress of our recovery and ask us how they can help. With this additional levee money, they have once again proven their commitment to rebuilding New Orleans region and the Gulf Coast.

"They have also shown their compassion for our most needy: the elderly, disabled, and extremely poor who were left homeless by the storms and are still struggling to find permanent housing. This bill will provide 3,000 housing vouchers to help get these vulnerable people off the streets and into safe, permanent homes. The Louisiana delegation was united in pushing for this critical funding, and we are all pleased the White House has signed off on it.

"Unfortunately, many of our hurricane recovery needs did not make it through this round of negotiations with the President. Leadership in both the House and the Senate supported additional funding for our levees, hospitals, criminal justice system, and other needs. But the reality is, we were working with a President who has called the domestic funding 'excessive' and threatened to veto the entire bill because of it. Even though the additional recovery funding totaled less than what we spend in one day in Iraq, these important priorities were not included in this supplemental.

"Fortunately, this is not Louisiana's last shot at federal assistance. I will continue working with the rest of the delegation to bring more hurricane recovery and levee funding to south Louisiana. We need to be investing in the needs of this country - education, health care, infrastructure, and the economy - and I will keep fighting for bills that support our priorities."

Levees. The bill includes \$5.761 billion to continue repairing and restoring hurricane damaged projects, accelerate completion of New Orleans area flood and storm damage reduction projects, and provide 100-year storm protection for the greater New Orleans area.

Housing Vouchers. The bill includes \$73 million in funding for Louisiana Permanent Supportive Housing. This program will provide funding for the 3,000 units of permanent supportive housing that are envisioned in the HUD-approved Louisiana Road Home Program. This will enable the promise of the Road Home Program to address the housing needs of our most vulnerable citizens, in particular extremely low-income homeless, disabled and frail elderly persons, to be fulfilled.

Of the \$73,000,000 provided, \$20,000,000 will fund 2,000 project-based vouchers (funded for 1-year terms) with \$3,000,000 in administrative fees, and \$50,000,000 will fund 1,000 Shelter Plus Care units (funded for five-year terms). These are the ideal and proven housing programs for creating permanent supportive housing for the populations in question.

Rep. Melancon led a delegation letter in October 2007 urging House leadership and appropriators to fund the housing vouchers in the next supplemental ([click here](#) to view letter). In the letter, Rep. Melancon and the delegation wrote:

"For these poorest members of our community, recovery is far from complete. Their primary need is permanent supportive housing (PSH)....Supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective means of stabilizing and dramatically improving the lives of people with severe disabilities who have the lowest incomes....We also request that this [funding] be designated as emergency spending to help the poorest of our people who are still living in the worst possible circumstances as a result of the hurricanes."

Since the storms of 2005, nearly all hurricane recovery funding for south Louisiana has been passed as part of the war emergency supplemental appropriations bills.

In the 2007 Supplemental Appropriations bill, Congress provided over \$6.4 billion to the Gulf Coast for ongoing hurricane recovery needs, including \$1.3 billion for levees (click [here](#) for details).

In October 2007, Congress appropriated an additional \$3 billion to fully fund Louisiana's Road Home program.

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